

NORTHALLERTON
RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

MEDICAL OFFICER'S
ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE

Year ended December 31st, 1900

BY

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NORTHALLERTON :

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MEDICAL OFFICER'S REPORT

For the Year ended December 31st, 1900.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to present my eighth Annual Report as Medical Officer of Health for your area.

Number of Deaths,	Population in 1891,	Death Rate per 1,000,
113.	7,470.	General 14·72,
		Infant Mortality
		128 per 1,000 children
		registered.

No. of persons belonging to area who died elsewhere, 3.

No. of Births, 163,	Birth Rate per 1,000,
of these 79 were males and 84 females.	21·8.
6 were illegitimate.	

Zymotic Death Rate, ·8. Average age at death, 39·6 years.

The Tables shew—

1. A lower general death rate	14·72,	as against	15·26	for 1899.
2. A lower infant mortality	128,	„	183	„
3. A lower birth rate	21·8,	„	23·29	„
4. A Zymotic death rate of	·8	„	·8	„
5. A further reduction in				
illegitimates	6	„	7	„
6. An average age at death of	39·6	„	40	„

51 persons died aged 65 and upwards, of these 27 were septuagenarians, and 10 were octogenarians.

SANITARY WORK FOR THE YEAR.

AINDERBY STEEPLE.—88 yards of 6in. sanitary pipe sewer with settling tank in Warlaby Lane. New settling tank on line of old drain westwards.

GREAT SMEATON.—72 yards of 6in. sanitary pipe sewer, with two trapped surface water grates, and chambers for ditto. Also one inspection chamber near the schoolmaster's house. New sanitary offices for the schools.

THORNTON-LE-BEANS.—29 yards of 4in. sewer, and 28 yards of 6in. sewer with chamber and trapped surface water grate.

HORNBY.—22 yards 6in. sewer, with small chamber and trapped surface water grate.

MORTON-ON-SWALE.—126 yards of 6in. sewer with inspection chamber (from “Non Plus” Inn to end of Cockett stream).

EAST COWTON, AND WESTERN PORTION OF EAST HARLSEY.—No actual structural work has yet been done for the proposed new sewers at these villages, but both contracts are now let. The contracts fixed for these works at date of my last annual report, have not been carried out; as now arranged, however, these sewers are to be laid down as soon as possible.

ROMANBY.—Plans have been prepared for an extension of Romanby Sewer, and the work is to be proceeded with as early as practicable. The Willow Garth, into which the village drains, has been re-piled where necessary, and 800 young willows were planted in March.

BROMPTON.—Referring to last year’s report, the scheme by Messrs. Balfour and Son for the re-drainage of Brompton village was submitted to the Council in spring, but was not adopted owing to considerations of cost—estimate of works together with cost of necessary land, &c., amounting to some £3000, for a village having an estimated population of 1000, or less.

The Council has therefore again instructed our own surveyor to prepare plans and estimates for a scheme to meet the requirements of the Local Government Board.

SPECIAL SANITARY MEETINGS.—In addition to the ordinary monthly meetings of the Council, four quarterly meetings are held for the discussion of purely sanitary business. Amongst important matters which have been under consideration at these meetings may be mentioned, THE WORKS ALREADY REFERRED TO.

The Formation of a combined Hospital Area.

The large area considered was found to present many difficulties, and has not been persisted in, while the expediency of forming a small combined area has not yet been under discussion.

Adoption of Model Bye-Laws of the Local Government Board relating to New Buildings.

These were adopted with the important and deplorable modification that no limit is placed on the size of ashpits:—the result of this will be that the majority of new houses within your area will continue to be furnished with privy middens which are abominations.

Systematic Scavenging for the larger villages.

Tenders were received for several villages, amongst others £30 for Brompton, £8 for Borrowby, £6 for Appleton Wiske, £20 for Osmotherley, £5 for West Rounton, £8 for East Harlsey, and £5 for Danby Wiske. There appears to be a disposition in the Council to shelve this question on the score of expense: it is to be remembered,

however, that one of the first duties of District Councillors is to spare no reasonable expenditure to secure healthy dwellings within their area : and that no dwelling can be healthy unless regular and frequent removal of all filth be provided for. . . . Even should the figures quoted prove to be irreducible, they are not excessive sums to pay for the cleanliness, comfort, and lessened liability to disease and death which would undoubtedly result from the adoption of systematic scavenging, as from every other sound sanitary measure. Expenditure withheld in this way does not represent money saved. Apart altogether from humanitarian considerations, disease and death make many and heavy calls upon the rates, and much of this is without doubt preventible by good sanitation ; in all such matters very grave responsibility both to the community at large, and to individuals, rests with District Councillors.

* * * * *

INSPECTIONS have been made at Ainderby, Morton, Thrintoft, Langton, Yafforth, Rounton, Smeaton, Danby Wiske, Romanby, Hornby, and a portion of Osmotherley, in addition to 134 inspections of premises in consequence of complaints and outbreaks of infectious disease.

226 re-inspections.

16 statutory notices served.

2 houses disinfected by the Inspector.

1 ashpit cleaned and disinfected by the Council.

7 new sanitary pipe drains laid to houses.

6 house drains opened and repaired.

16 new trapped gullies put down.

27 privy ashpits built, repaired, and covered.

6 ashpits cleaned by order.

1 heap of offensive refuse removed.

3 quantitative analyses of well water made.

3 qualitative analyses of well water made.

3 wells condemned as unfit for domestic purposes.

1 ventilation shaft furnished to Yafforth village cesspool.

It may be stated here that great difficulty has been experienced throughout the year, by property owners, in securing the services of workpeople to make necessary repairs and alterations.

Cases of Infectious Disease dealt with during the Year.

Fifty-six cases of dangerous infectious disease have been dealt with during the year, as against 95 for the preceding year. Of these two proved fatal, against 5 for the preceding year.

JANUARY. SCARLET FEVER—3 at Harlsey, 3 at Hutton Bonville, 3 at Brompton, 3 at Kiplin, 4 at Smeaton, 1 at Hornby, 1 at Osmotherley.

DIPHTHERIA—1 at Rueberry, Osmotherley.

FEBRUARY. SCARLET FEVER—2 at Little Smeaton, 2 at Entercommon,
3 at Appleton Wiske.

DIPHTHERIA—1 at Brompton.

MARCH. SCARLET FEVER—1 at Appleton Wiske, 1 at Brompton, 4 at
Hornby.

APRIL. ERYSIPELAS—2 at Brompton.

MAY Nil.

JUNE. DIPHTHERIA—1 at Yafforth, 1 at Brompton.

JULY. TYPHOID FEVER—2 at Welbury, 1 at Romanby.
ERYSIPELAS—1 at Osmotherley.

AUGUST. SCARLET FEVER—2 at Ainderby, 2 at Morton.
ERYSIPELAS—1 at Thimbleby, 1 at Rounton.

SEPTEMBER. CONTINUED FEVER—1 at Five Mile Bank.

OCTOBER. SCARLET FEVER—1 at Danby Wiske.

NOVEMBER. ERYSIPELAS—1 at Brompton.
SCARLET FEVER—1 at Brompton.
TYPHOID FEVER—1 at Borrowby.

DECEMBER. TYPHOID FEVER—3 at Borrowby.
ERYSIPELAS—1 at Thornton-le-Beans.
SCARLET FEVER—1 at Langton.

Twelve cases were isolated in the Fever Cottages—7 of Scarlet Fever, 3 of Typhoid Fever, and 2 of Diphtheria; all have done well; 1 case of Typhoid Fever passed through a serious relapse, and 3 cases of Typhoid are not yet discharged. As indicating the value of isolation in the Fever Cottages, I may point out that in every instance where the first cases were removed there has been no further infection. I am also glad to note that infectious patients are now much more easily induced to avail themselves of the advantages of isolation and skilled nursing in hospital than formerly. Of UNNOTIFIED INFECTIOUS DISEASE, Influenza was very prevalent during the earlier weeks of the year, and is accountable for 9 deaths; many cases of Whooping Cough also occurred, causing 2 deaths; and we had a widespread outbreak of Measles in the neighbourhood of Harlsey in July, due, probably, to infection imported by visitors from Wakefield. Two cases of Scarlet Fever ended fatally. The schools at Smeaton were closed in January owing to Scarlet Fever; and the schools at Harlsey in July owing to Measles.

More than half the total number of infectious cases were notified during the first quarter of the year.

Special reports were made of the outbreaks of Scarlet Fever, Measles, and Typhoid Fever as they occurred.

Printed instructions were given to those in charge of the sick, and, where necessary, disinfectants were supplied by the Council. The Formaline fumigating lamps have proved most useful and manageable

for the disinfection of rooms and clothing. A new fever cab is now available in place of the dilapidated vehicle hitherto used for conveying infectious patients to Hospital. The sheet of printed instructions for those in charge of Fever cases was recently revised and approved.

Present Sanitary Condition of area.

The Sanitary condition of your area is still generally bad, although year by year important improvements are effected both in public works and in the sanitation of private properties.

WATER CLOSETS.—Very few ; there are only some 40 within the area.

EARTH CLOSETS are practically unknown in the district, which is to be regretted as they would prove an immense improvement on many wretched offices at present in use. If your officers were furnished with one or two specimens of these conveniences, we could induce many property owners to adopt them.

PRIVY MIDDENS are generally adopted, and are for the most part miserable and dangerous appurtenances, badly placed and constructed, uncovered, uncemented, and receiving rain water from neighbouring buildings, with the result that the contents, instead of being dry and inoffensive, are putrid, the soil sewage sodden, the air foul, and the well polluted. Refuse is removed by private arrangement with neighbouring farmers, and in the larger villages it is found impossible to get this done as often as is necessary.

House Drainage.

Although some improvement is being gradually effected in this respect, the house drainage of your district is generally bad.

Systematic Scavenging

is not yet adopted, except for Brompton cesspools. The importance of systematic scavenging has already been urged.

Sewerage of District.

Many village sewers in your area remain in a very unsatisfactory condition ; several are formed of common field tiles ; such may still be found at Brompton, East Cowton, East Harlsey, Thrintoft, West Rounton, Great Smeaton, and Borrowby ; while at Thrintoft, Ainderby Steeple, and Welbury, extensions are required in addition to the re-laying of old and faulty drains. Notwithstanding the works already done, it cannot yet be said of any of our villages that the sewerage is satisfactory.

Pollution of Streams.

The sewage of Romanby is treated by land filtration in the Willow Garth. All other villages contribute to the pollution of streams, Brompton being the greatest offender in this respect. The beck as it

flows through the village is often extremely offensive in summer time. Happily the nuisance arising from this pollution is felt only in Brompton—the stream appearing to purify itself before reaching Northallerton. Throughout last summer the nuisance, and danger to health, arising from Romanby beck were as great as ever they were before Northallerton adopted a chemical system of sewage treatment.

Several villages pass their sewage through interception tanks, but do not deal further with it before discharging into streams, while others—notably Osmotherley and Borrowby, discharge their sewage direct into the stream. Both have been under the consideration of your Council now for some years, but nothing has been done.

Water Supply of area—

mainly from surface wells.

Brompton, Osmotherley, and High Silton have good water supplies, and Low Silton is now better provided for. At Brompton, however, many property owners fail to take water from the mains, and their tenants are consequently compelled to use impure water from surface wells.

Slaughter Houses and Dairies

from which milk is sold, are on the whole satisfactorily kept as to cleanliness and limewashing. Some however are structurally defective, and many private dairies are badly placed being too near pigstyes and other objectionable surroundings.

Schools

on the whole satisfactory as to cleanliness, ventilation, and out offices. The privy ashpit at Silton School is still much too large, and is only partially covered.

Burial Grounds.

Osmotherley Churchyard is now practically filled, it is also in very close proximity to dwelling houses, and ought to be closed.

Great hardship is complained of by the poorer inhabitants of Thornton-le-Beans who have to go to North Otterington for burial purposes—a distance of over five miles by road. The Church at Thornton-le-Beans stands in an unconsecrated garth which is suitable for a burial ground and ought to be secured for this purpose.

A special report was made in July on Danby Wiske Churchyard, in consequence of complaint that interments had often taken place when it was found impossible to prevent water from rising in the graves to within 4ft. of the surface without constant baling. The public health does not appear to suffer in any way from the Churchyard. There can however be no doubt that the grievance complained of does exist, and that it causes more or less distress to mourners, especially when interments have to take place during flood time.

Other burial grounds within the area are sufficient for present requirements.

The Isolation Cottage continues to render useful service. A working arrangement with the Urban District Council enables both authorities to deal with two kinds of infectious disease at one time. This arrangement has proved mutually advantageous during the past year. Both Hospitals are ready for the reception of cases at a few hours' notice. It must be understood however that the combined cottages are a very poor substitute for a properly constructed and equipped Fever Hospital. The cottages are too near the highway, they are too small, structurally defective and unsuitable, the accommodation for nurses and patients is altogether inadequate, it is impossible to avoid overcrowding, and it is never possible to receive a third kind of infectious disease without incurring grave danger to all.

I am gratified to note a great increase in public recognition of the necessity for good and sufficient hospital accommodation for patients suffering from infectious diseases.

Notification of Infectious Diseases

continues to give satisfactory results, and I have again to acknowledge the courteous assistance invariably accorded me by my professional neighbours in carrying out my duties under this Act.

Common Lodging Houses.

There are only two in your area; one at Appleton Wiske is kept and conducted satisfactorily, the other at Osmotherley is a constant source of trouble, there are serious structural defects in the yard and out offices, and the ground floor especially is always far from satisfactory. Were it not for the fact that there is no other lodging house between Yarm and Thirsk, I should press for the closing of this house. Under this circumstance however, closing the house would probably lead to sleeping out by tramps and thus do more harm than good.

Offensive Trades.

None. There is however considerable traffic in town refuse at some of our country stations, and I frequently receive complaints of nuisance arising therefrom. Two patients suffering from Typhoid Fever attributed their illnesses to bad smells endured while engaged in carrying and spreading town manure sent from Middlesbro', and I was unable to account for these cases of fever in any other way—one case proved fatal. Cowton Station was visited twice in July in consequence of complaints of nuisance arising from town manure sent from South Shields, which contained a quantity of decomposing fish. Some of the station officials, when interviewed, complained in strong terms of the vile smells given off from this manure, but when asked if they would give evidence to that effect in case of legal proceedings, all declined. I am pleased to report that during the past summer much more effort has been made by farmers to get their manure away on delivery at the siding.

Workshops and Factories.

Satisfactory as to sanitation.

**INDICATIONS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION
AND ACTION.**

- I.—Completion of the resewering of all our villages.
- II.—The supply of pure water by property owners at Brompton to those tenants who are at present without wholesome water, should be insisted on without further delay.
- III.—The adoption of systematic scavenging for your larger villages.
- IV.—The provision of additional burying ground for Osmotherley and Thornton-le-Beans.
- V.—The provision of better hospital accommodation for cases of infectious disease.

In conclusion I have again to acknowledge my great indebtedness to Mr. Easdale for his efficient and ready help at all times.

I am, Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

J. A. HUTCHINSON, M.D.